Romantic ideas: music, nature, arts

Lecture 7 | Music in the Classical and Romantic Eras MCGY2612

Moritz von Schwind, 'A Schubertiade' (1868)

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THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

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SCHUMANN, ‘WIDMUNG’ from *MYRTHEN* (1840)

Dedication

You are my soul, you are my heart

You are my delight and also my sorrow

You are the world in which I live

The heaven in which I soar

O you are my grave, in which

I laid to rest my grief forever

You are repose, you are peace

You are granted to me from heaven

Since you love me, I am made worthy

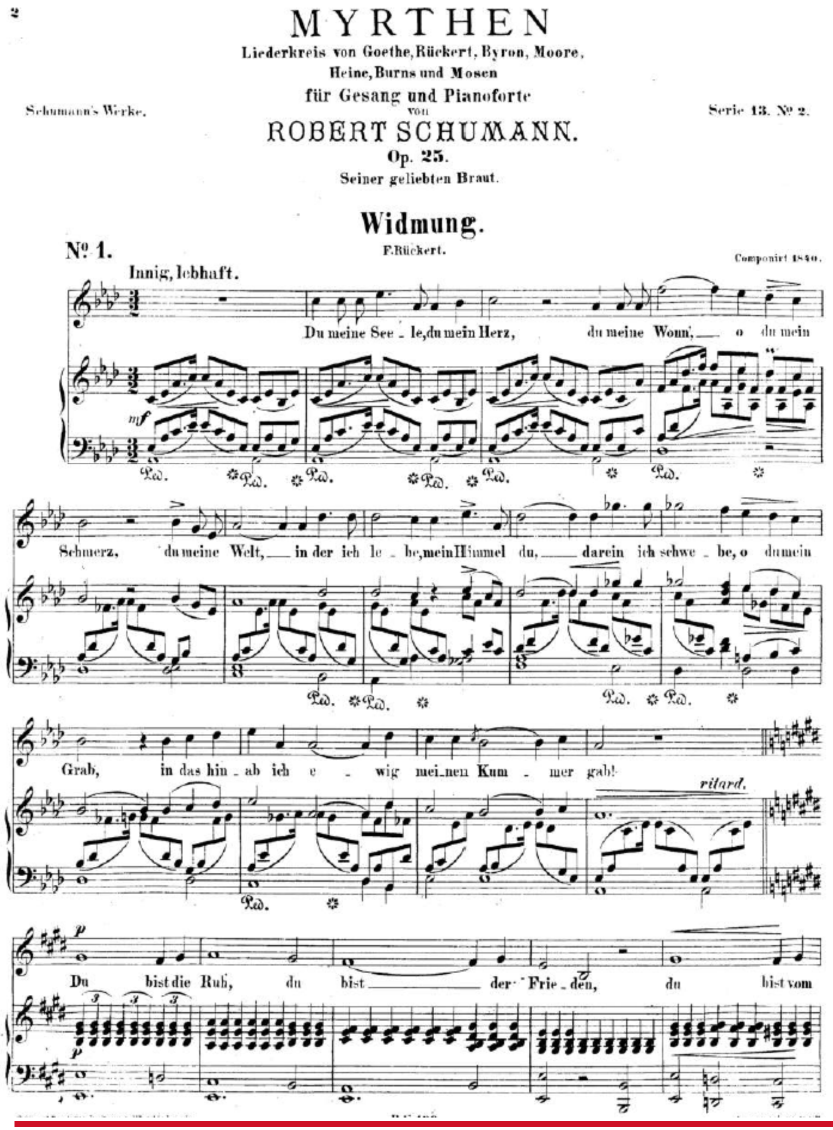
Your glance has transfigured me

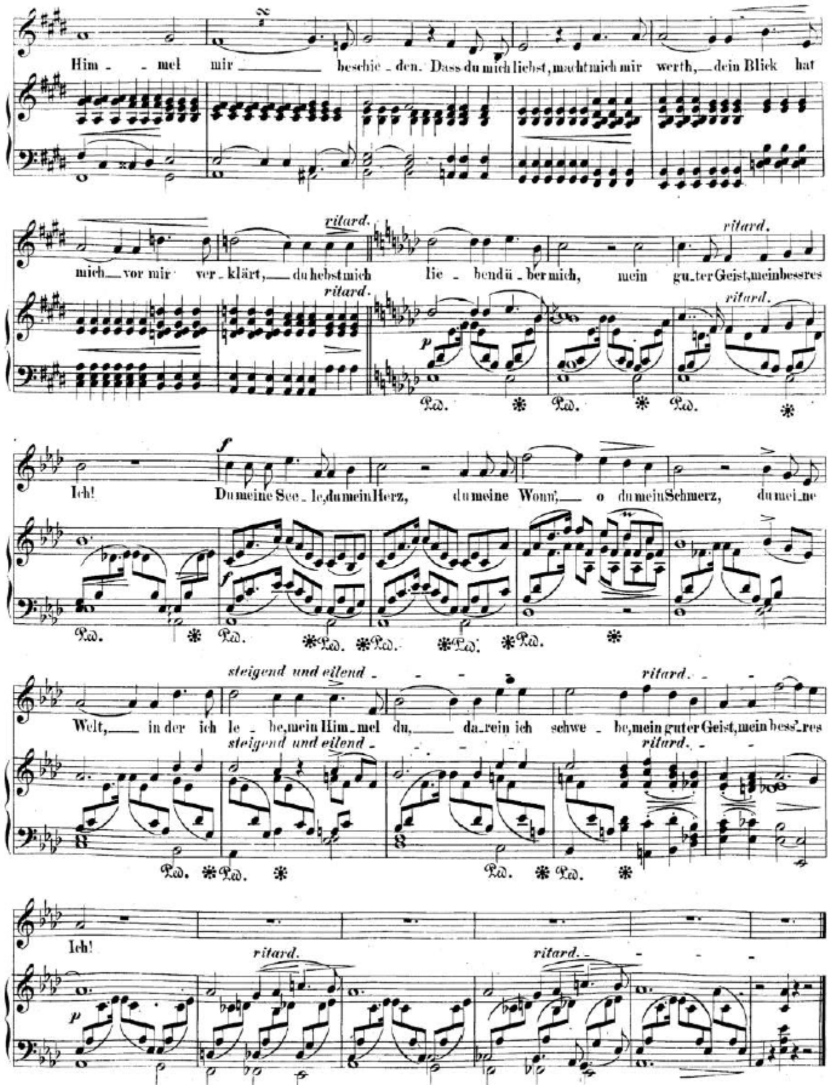
You raise me lovingly above myself

My gracious spirit, my better self.

Joseph Kriehuber, ‘Robert Schumann’ (1839)

SCHUMANN, ‘WIDMUNG’ from *MYRTHEN* Op.25





ROMANTICISM IN CONTEXT

Some important figures in European Romanticism

- Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744-1803): poet, collector of folksong verse
- Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832): poet, writer, polymath
- Friedrich Schiller (1759-1805): poet, dramatist
- Jean-Paul [Richter] (1763-1825): novelist
- Mme de Staël (1766-1817): writer
- August (1767-1845) & Friedrich (1772-1829) Schlegel: poets, critics
- Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831): philosopher
- Ernst Theodor Amadeus Hoffmann (1776-1822): writer, critic, composer
- Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860): philosopher
- Heinrich Heine (1797-1856): poet, journalist
- Victor Hugo (1802-1885): playwright, litterateur

ASPECTS OF ROMANTICISM

Some important characteristics of Romanticism

- Expression of the self
- Reaction against Enlightenment rationality
- Art as religion (*Kunstreligion*)

Important developments in music

- Establishment of the musical canon
- Organicist conception of the artwork
- Music and its relationship to non-musical entities
  - Autonomy: instrumental music self-sufficient (‘absolute music’), cannot be translated into language – e.g. Hoffmann, Mendelssohn (later Hanslick)
  - Heteronomy: instrumental music can convey poetic ideas, can express specific feelings and other content – e.g. F. Schlegel, Liszt (later Hausegger)

HOFFMANN ON MUSIC AND ROMANTICISM [1/2]

Quotations taken from his 1810 review of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony

- When music is spoken of as an independent art the term can properly apply only to instrumental music, which scorns all aid, all admixture of other arts, and gives pure expression to its own peculiar artistic nature. It is the most romantic of all the arts – one might almost say the only one that is *purely* romantic. (236)

- In singing, where the juxtaposed poetry suggests precise moods through words, the magical power of music acts likes the philosopher’s miracle-elixir, a few drops of which make any drink wonderfully delicious. Any passion – love, hate, anger, despair, etc. – presented to us in an opera is clothed by music in the purple shimmer of romanticism, so that even our mundane sensations take us out of the everyday into the realm of the infinite. Such is the power of music’s spell that, growing ever stronger, it can only bursts the fetters of any other art. (237)

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HOFFMANN ON MUSIC AND ROMANTICISM [2/2]

- Beethoven is a purely romantic, and therefore truly musical, composer. This may well explain why his vocal music is less successful, since it does not permit vague yearning but can only depict from the realm of the infinite those feelings capable of being described in words. (238)

- [In *Kreisleriana* (1814), Hoffmann has one character say the following]
  Our kingdom is not of this world, for where in nature do we find the prototypes for our art, as say painters and sculptors do? Sound resides in all things; but notes, that is to say melodies which speak the higher language of the spirit-realm, repose only in the breasts of men.

E. T. A. Hoffmann (1776-1822)

http://eta.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/de/includes/fenster.php?bild=/pix/bildergalerie/01.gif&titel=E.T.A.%20Hoffmann

TYPES OF CHARACTER PIECE

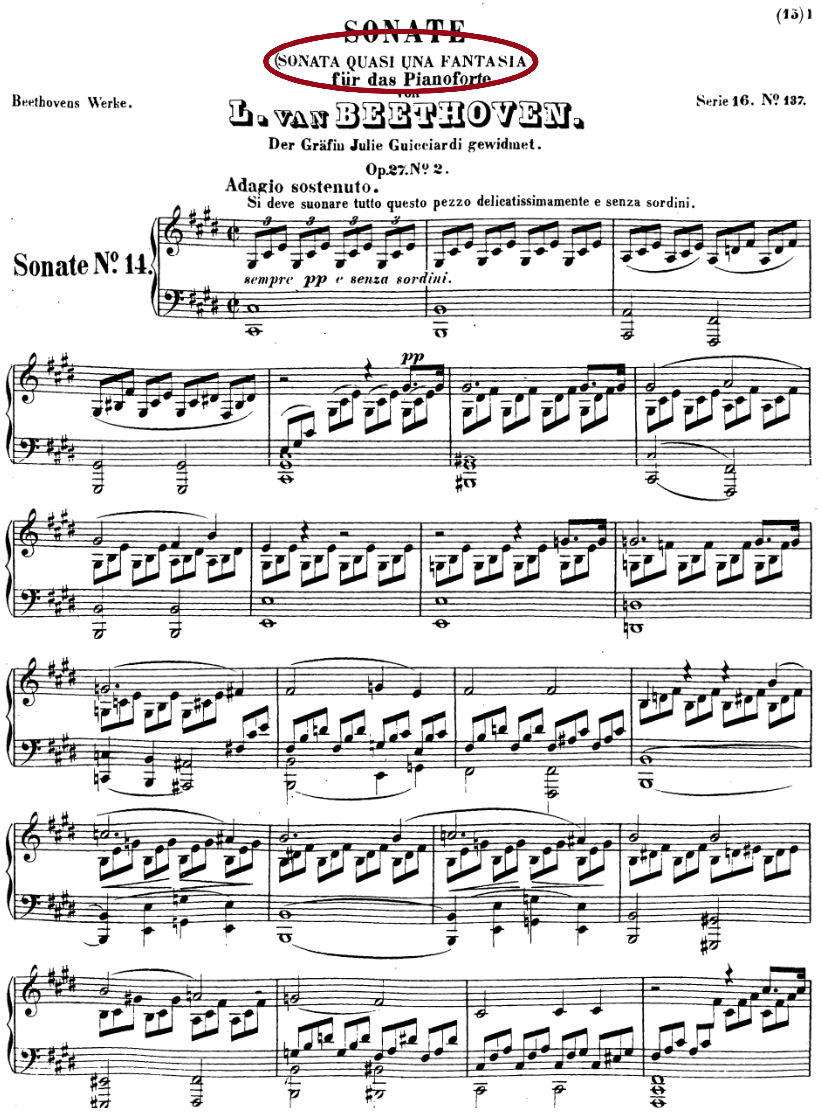
Eugene Delacroix, ‘Frederic Chopin’ (c.1838)

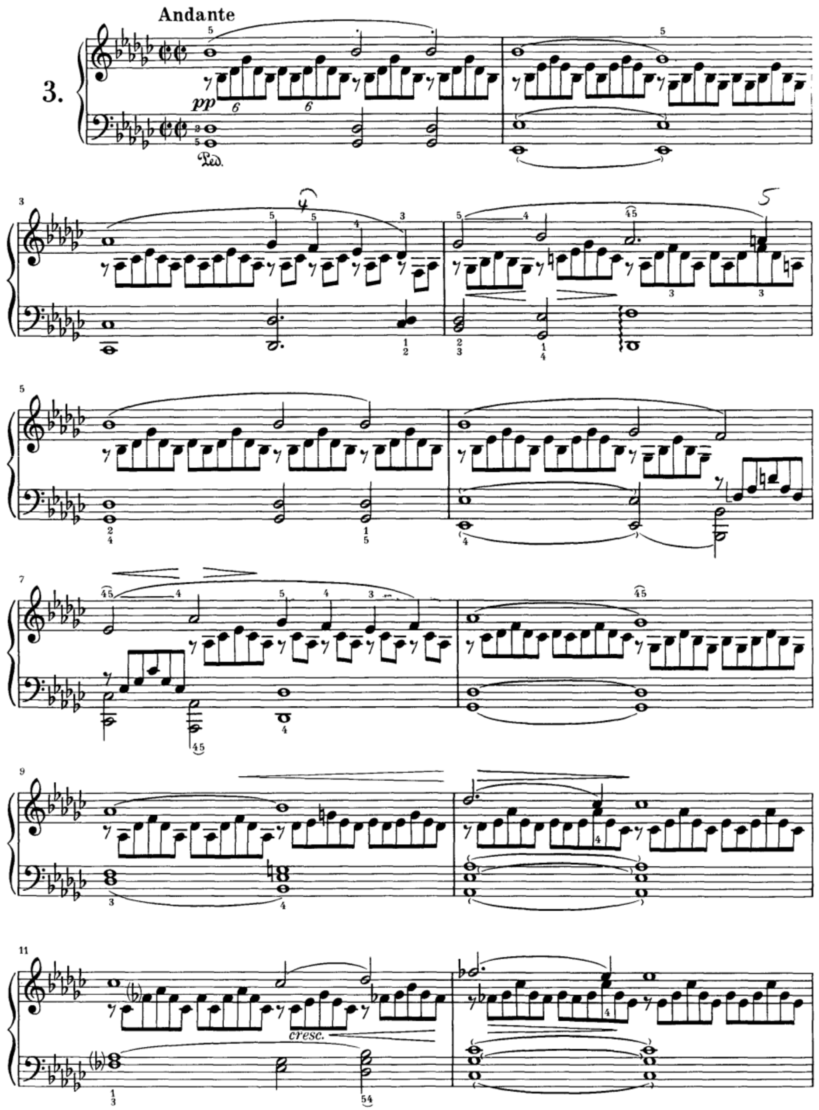
James Warren Childe, ‘Felix Mendelssohn’ (c.1839)

The Romantic *Charakterstück* could come in a variety of guises

- Improvisation: impromptus, fantasies, preludes, moments musicaux
- Dance types: waltz, mazurka, polonaise, czardas
- Derived from poetry/song: ballade, song without words, lyric piano piece
- Didactic: etude
- Visual: Albumblatt [page from an album], -szenen (Kinderszenen, Waldszenen)

MOONLIGHT & SCHUBERTIAN ECHOES





Beethoven, Sonata quasi una Fantasia, Op. 27 no. 2/I ‘Moonlight’

Schubert, Impromptu Op. 90/3, D.899

MENDELSSOHN’S *LIEDER OHNE WORTE*

Inhalt

Sechs Lieder ohne Worte
Erstes Heft · op. 19b

1. Andante con moto E-Dur 1
2. Andante espressivo a-Moll 3
3. Molto allegro e vivace A-Dur (Jägerlied) 5
4. Moderato A-Dur 8
5. Poco agitato fis-Moll 9
6. Venezianisches Gondellied: Andante sostenuto g-Moll 13

Sechs Lieder ohne Worte
Zweites Heft · op. 30

1. Andante espressivo Es-Dur 14
2. Allegro di molto b-Moll 16
3. Adagio non troppo E-Dur 18
4. Agitato e con fuoco h-Moll 19
5. Andante grazioso D-Dur 22
6. Venezianisches Gondellied: Allegretto tranquillo fis-Moll 24

Sechs Lieder ohne Worte
Drittes Heft · op. 38

1. Con moto Es-Dur 26
2. Allegro non troppo c-Moll 28
3. Presto e molto vivace E-Dur 30
4. Andante A-Dur 34
5. Agitato a-Moll 35
6. Duetto: Andante con moto As-Dur 39

Sechs Lieder ohne Worte
Viertes Heft · op. 53

1. Andante con moto As-Dur 42
2. Allegro non troppo Es-Dur 44
3. Presto agitato g-Moll 47
4. Adagio F-Dur 51
5. Volkslied: Allegro con fuoco a-Moll 52
6. Molto allegro vivace A-Dur 54

Sechs Lieder ohne Worte
Fünftes Heft · op. 62

1. Andante espressivo G-Dur 58
2. Allegro con fuoco B-Dur 60
3. Andante maestoso e-Moll (Trauermarsch) 62
4. Allegro con anima G-Dur 64
5. Venezianisches Gondellied: Andante con moto a-Moll 65
6. Allegretto grazioso A-Dur (Frühlingslied) 67

Sechs Lieder ohne Worte
Sechstes Heft · op. 67

1. Andante Es-Dur 70
2. Allegro leggiero fis-Moll 72
3. Andante tranquillo B-Dur 75
4. Presto C-Dur (Spinnerlied) 76
5. Moderato h-Moll 80
6. Allegretto non troppo E-Dur 81

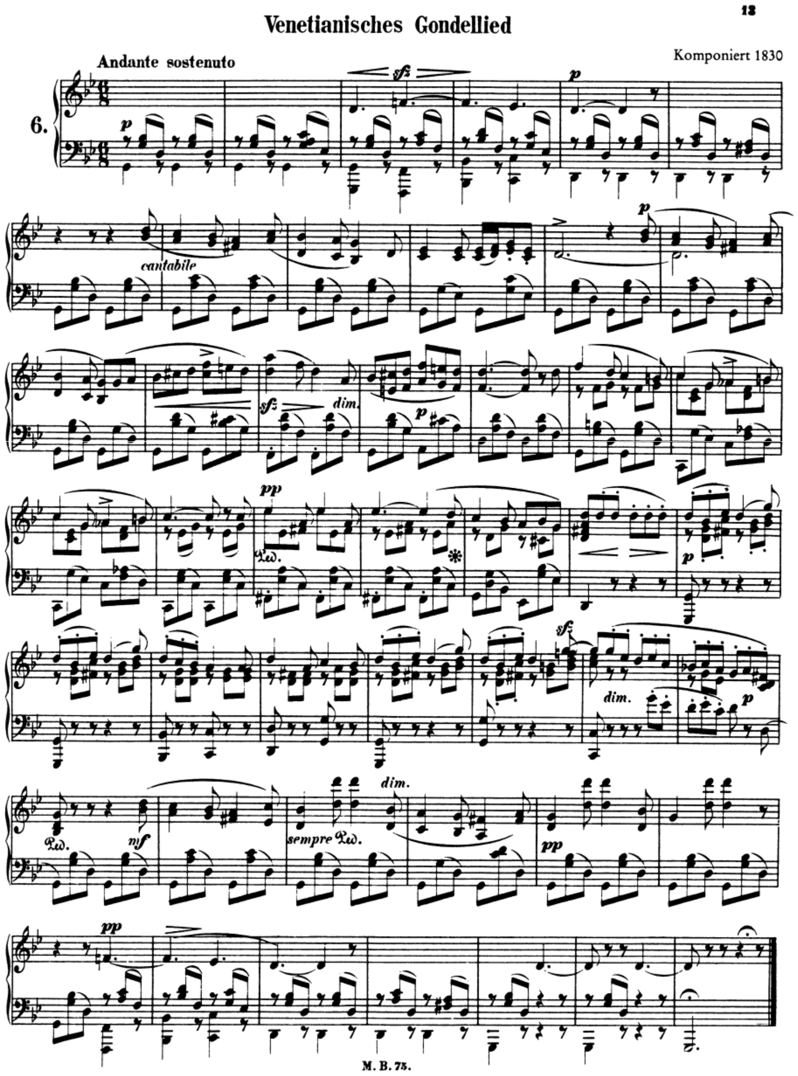
Sechs Lieder ohne Worte
Siebentes Heft · op. 85

1. Andante espressivo F-Dur 84
2. Allegro agitato a-Moll 86
3. Presto Es-Dur 87
4. Andante sostenuto D-Dur 90
5. Allegretto A-Dur 92
6. Allegretto con moto B-Dur 93

Sechs Lieder ohne Worte
Achtes Heft · op. 102

1. Andante un poco agitato e-Moll 96
2. Adagio D-Dur 98
3. Presto C-Dur 99
4. Un poco agitato, ma andante g-Moll 100
5. Allegro vivace A-Dur (Kinderstück) 103
6. Andante C-Dur 105

MENDELSSOHN, *LIED OHNE WORTE* OP. 19b/6



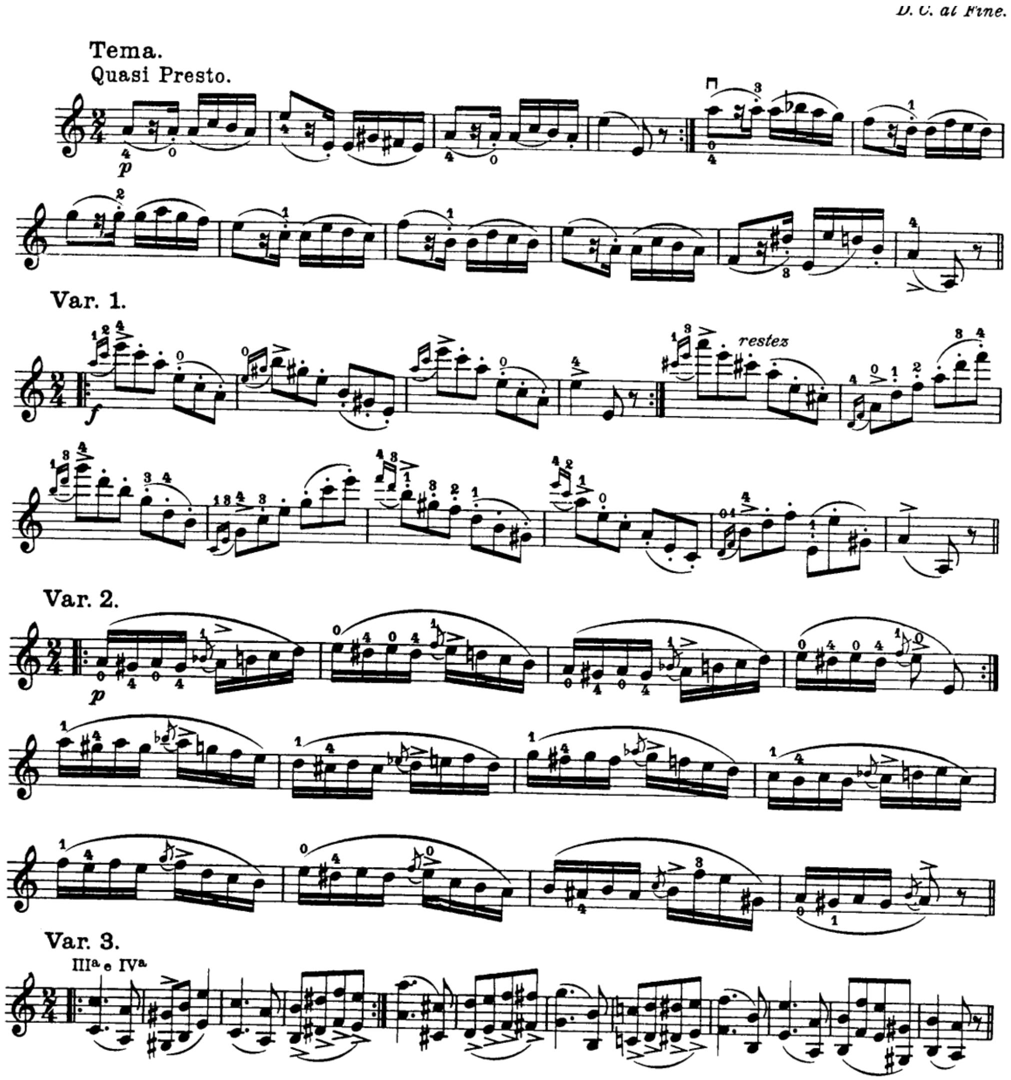
PAGANINI, THE DEMONIC VIOLINIST

But finally there appeared on the stage a dark figure, that seemed to have ascended from the underworld. This was Paganini in his first black gala. The black tailcoat and the black vest, from a bloodcurdling tailor, who was perhaps prescribed by the hellish etiquette at the court of Proserpine. The black pants anxiously shivering upon the thin legs. The long arms appeared yet further extended, while he held in the one hand the violin and in the other the lowered bow, and thereby almost touched the world, as he trotted out his outrageous bowing for the public. In the angular bending of his body lay a dreadful woodenness, and simultaneously something clownishly bestial, that must cause a strange risibility to come upon us; but his face, that seemed even more cadaverously white under the garish orchestra lighting, had something so beseeching, so idiotically humble, that a horrible compassion suppressed our impulse to merriment. Had he picked up these ceremonies from an automaton, or from a dog?

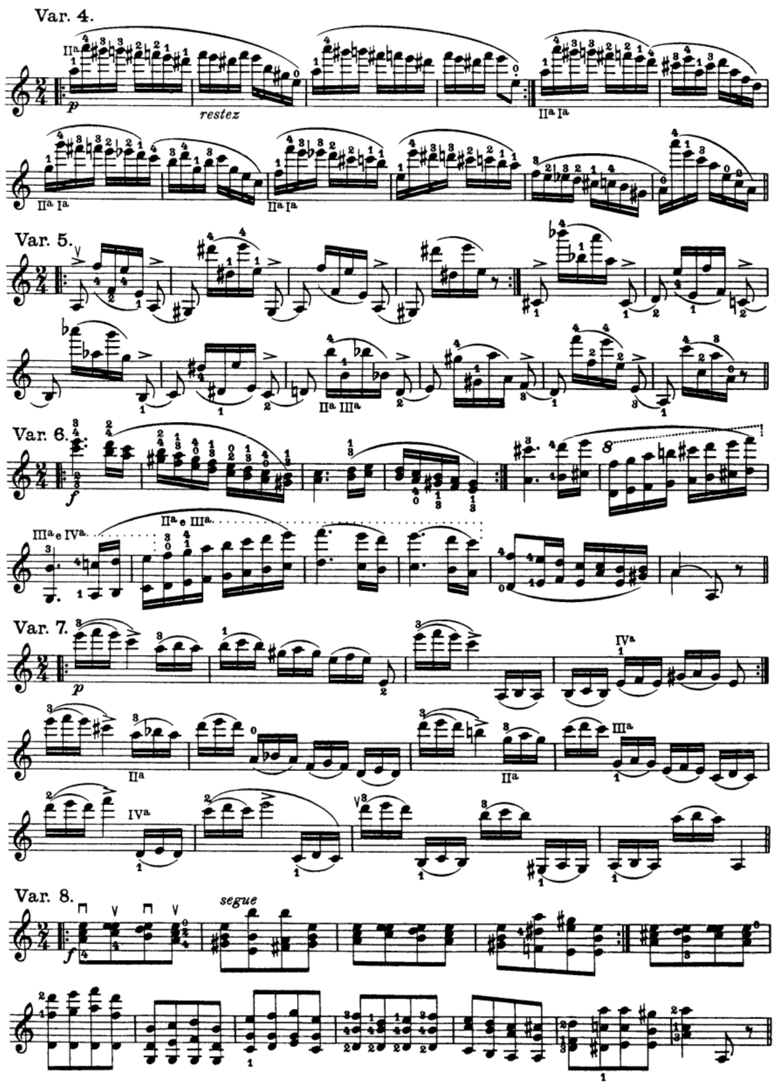
The Works of Heinrich Heine, translated by Charles Godfrey Leland, Vol. 1 (London: William Heinemann, 1906): 1-92
Present translation is from http://davidsbuendler.freehostia.com/paganini.htm, accessed 20 April 2010

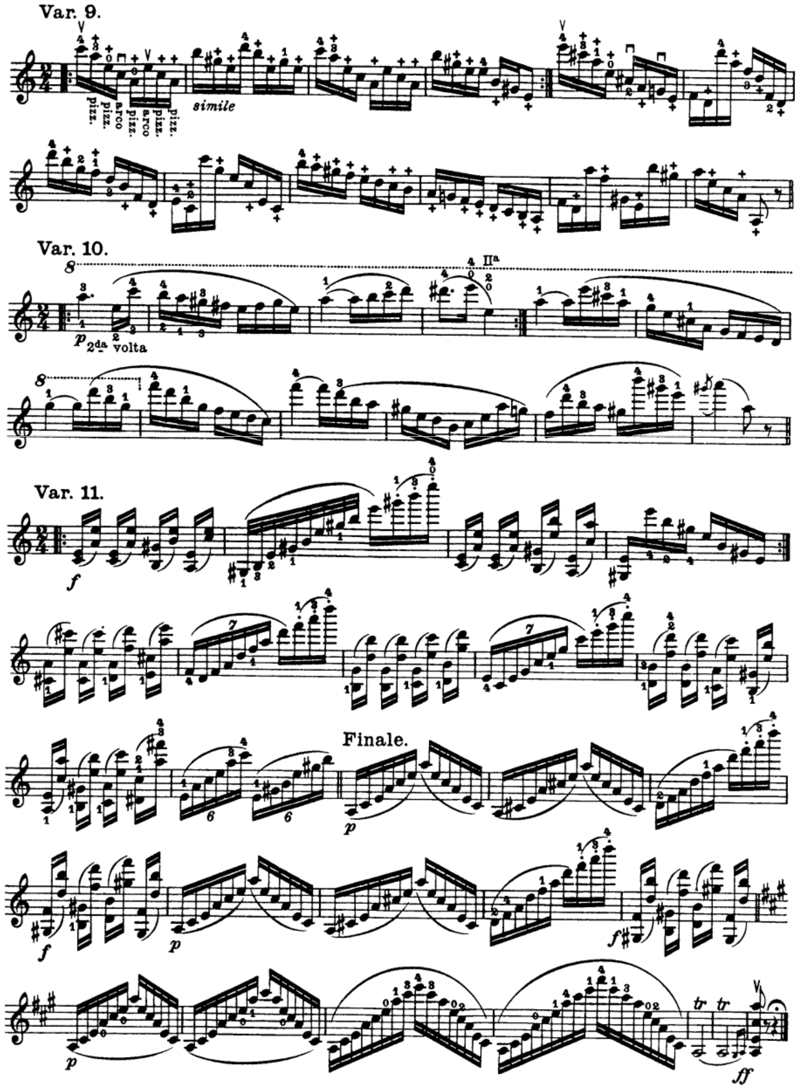
PAGANINI, CAPRICE NO. 24 [1/2]

Paganini, by J.A.D. Ingres



PAGANINI, CAPRICE NO. 24 [2/2]





LISZT AFTER HEARING PAGANINI

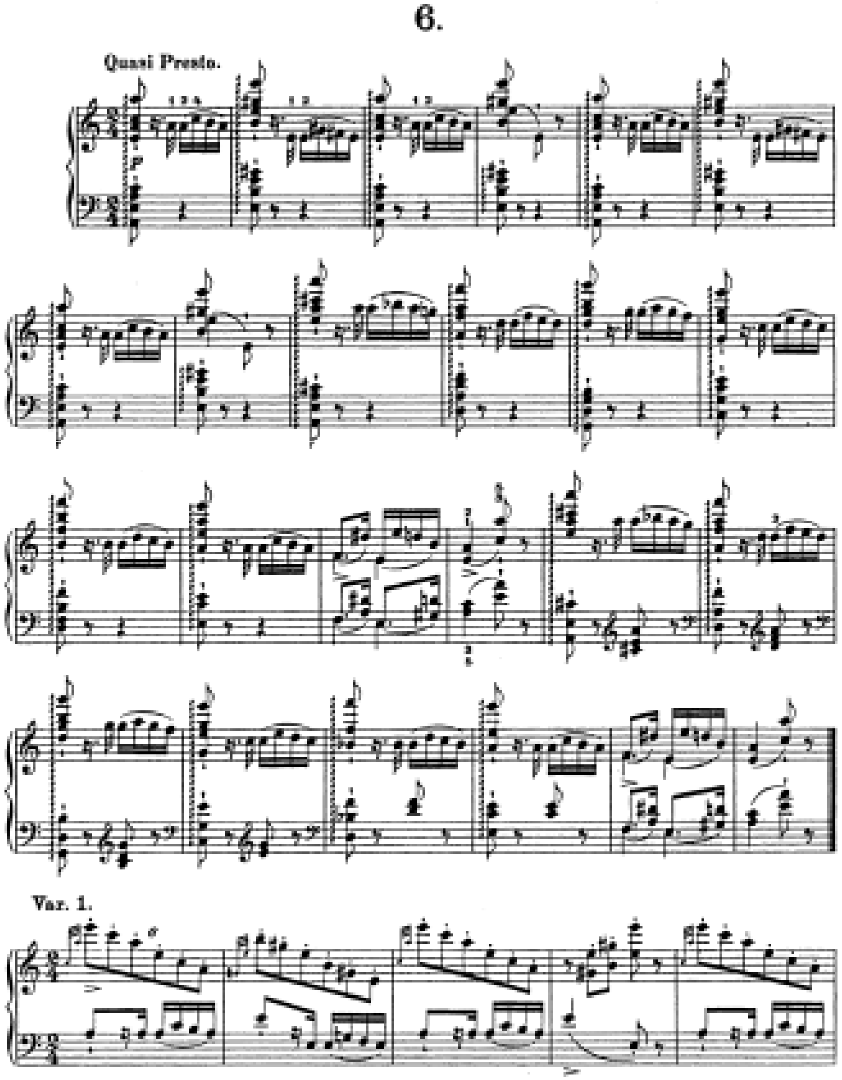
‘For a whole fortnight my mind and my fingers have been working like two lost souls. Homer, the Bible, Plato, Locke, Byron, Hugo, Lamartine, Chateaubriand, Beethoven, Bach, Hummel, Mozart, Weber are all around me. I study them, meditate on them, devour them with fury; besides this, I practise four to five hours of exercises (thirds, sixths, octaves, tremolos, repetition of notes, cadenzas, etc.) Ah! provided I don’t go mad you will find in me an artist! Yes, an artist... such as is required today.

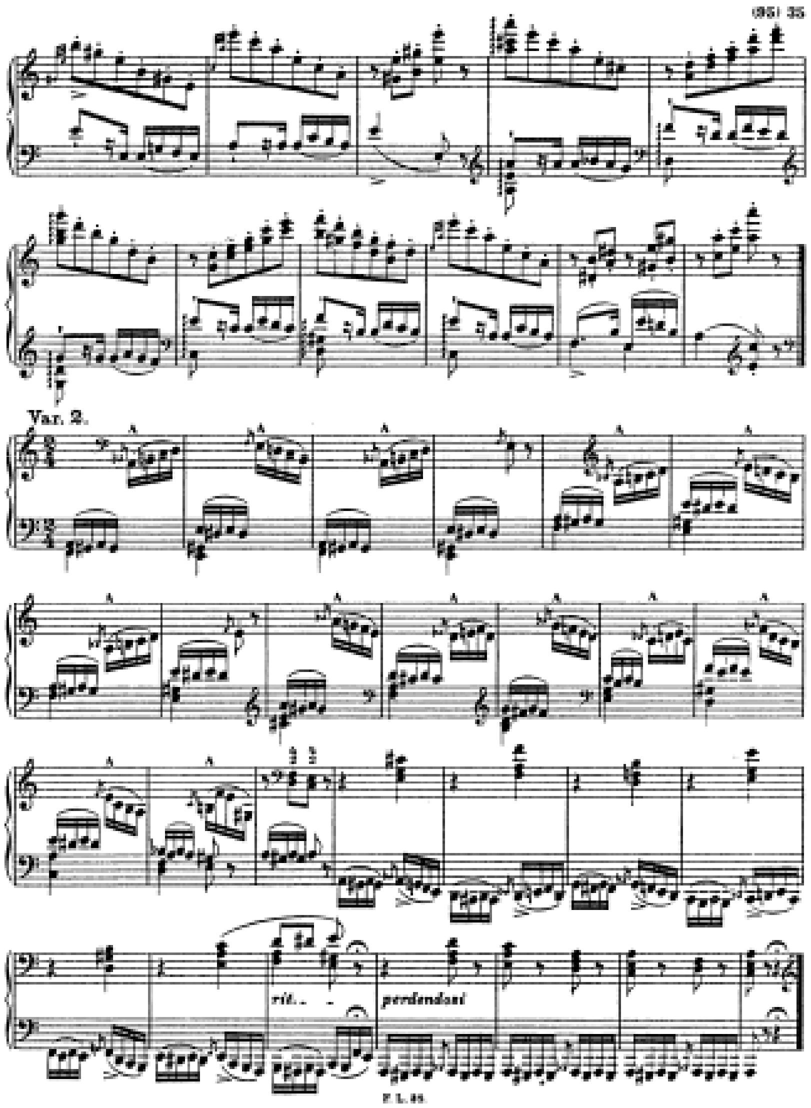
“And I too am a painter!’ cried Michelangelo the first time he beheld a masterpiece [*apparently it was actually Correggio on seeing Raphael’s painting of St. Cecilia*]. Your friend, though insignificant and poor, cannot leave off repeating those words of the great man since Paganini’s last performance. Heavens! What sufferings, what misery, what tortures in those four strings!

J.A.D. Ingres, ‘Liszt’

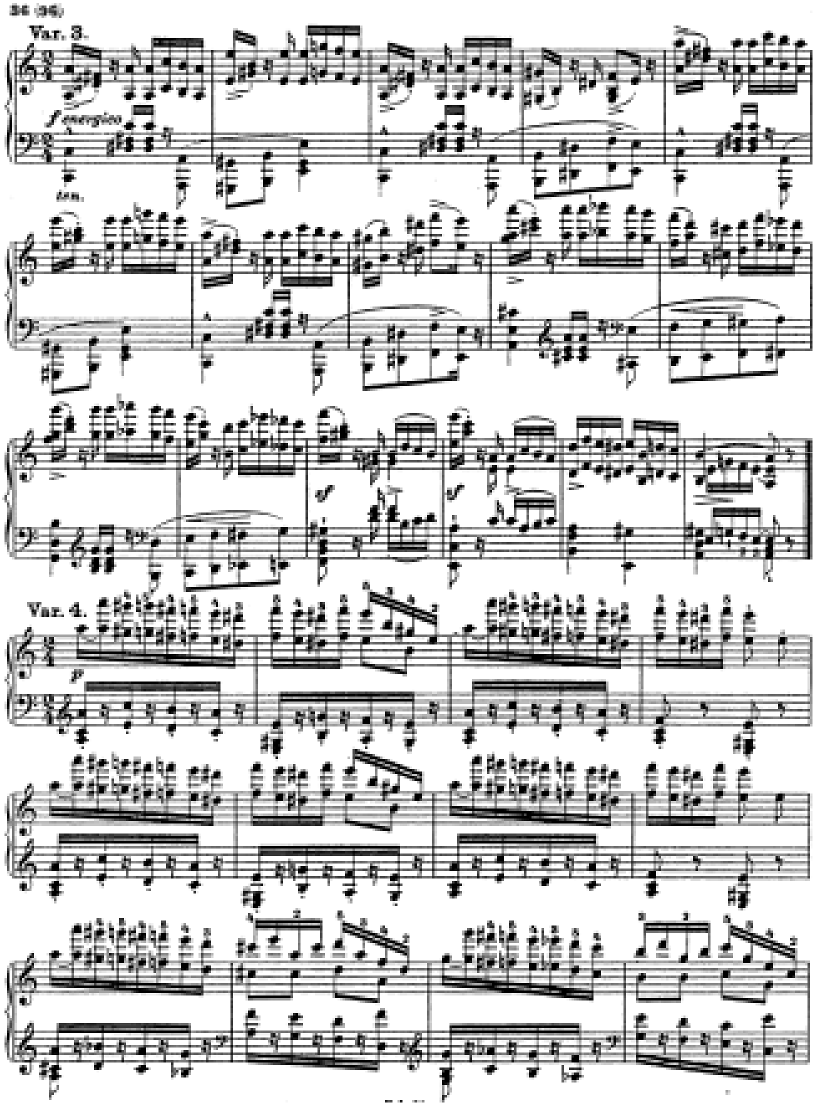
Letter from Liszt to Pierre Wolff, 2 May 1832, quoted in Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt* Vol. 1: *The Virtuoso Years 1811-1847*, rev. ed. (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1988): 173-174

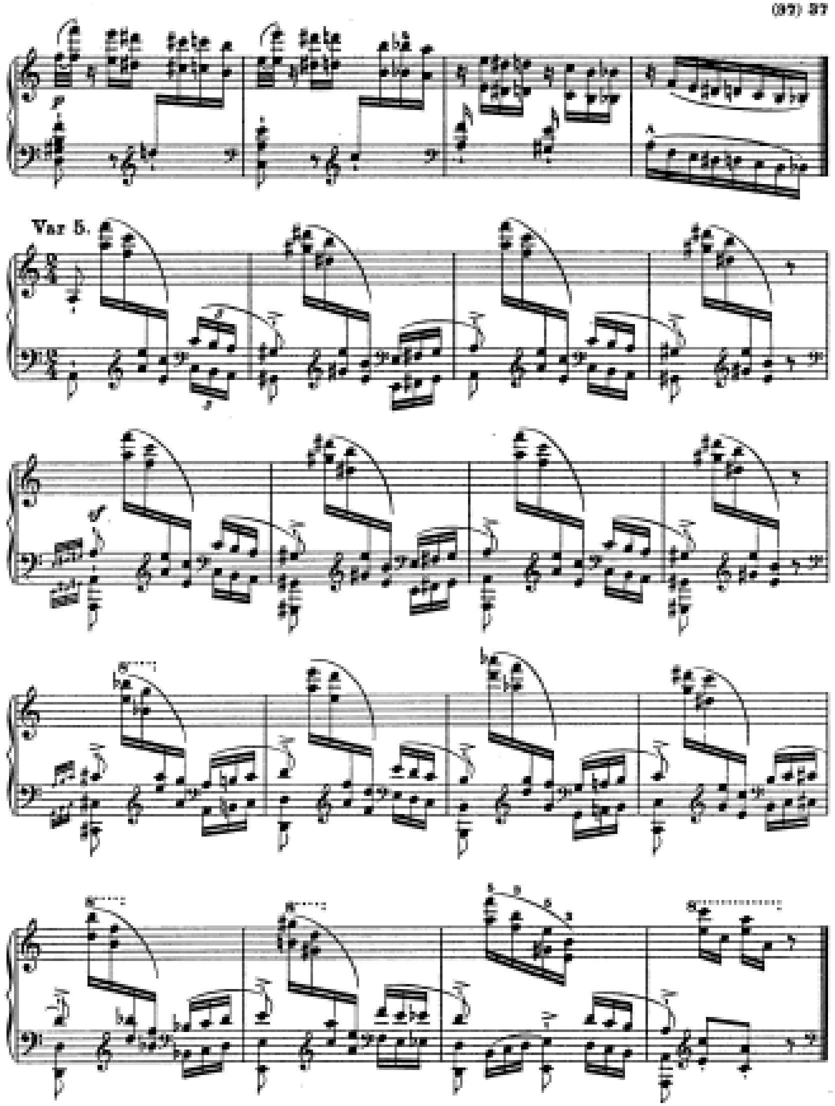
LISZT, PAGANINI STUDY NO. 6 [1/5]



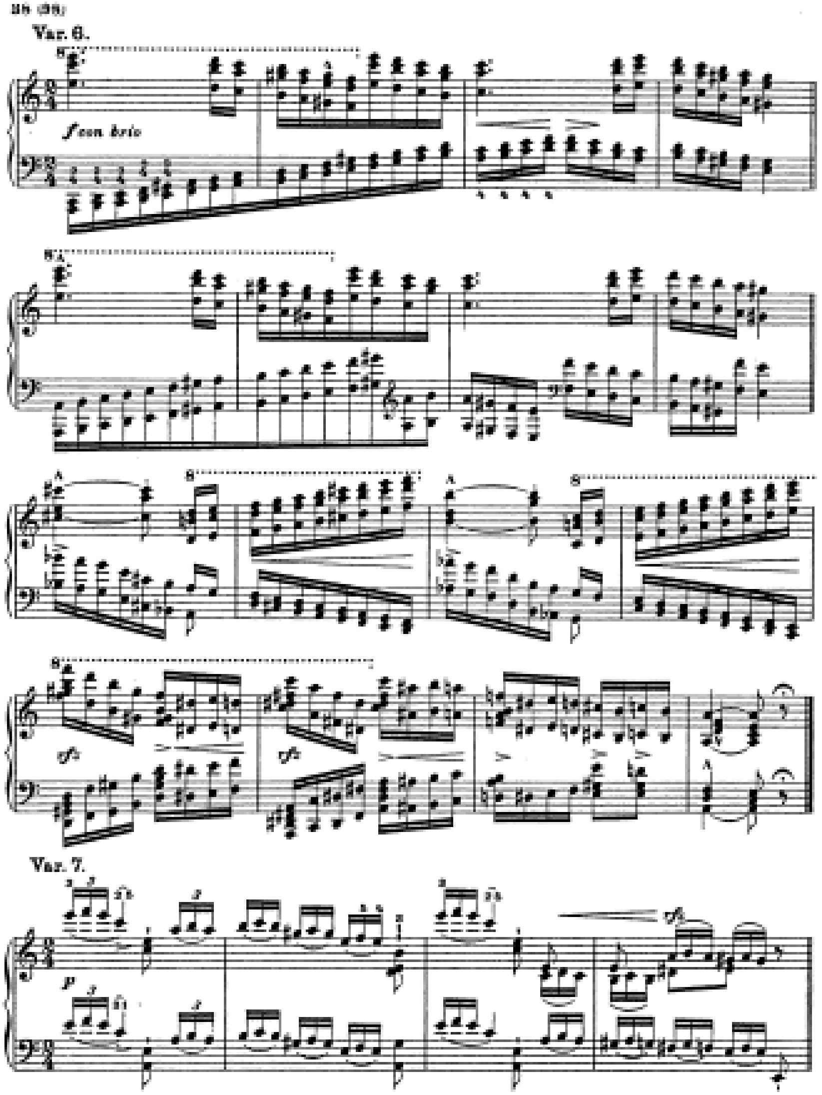


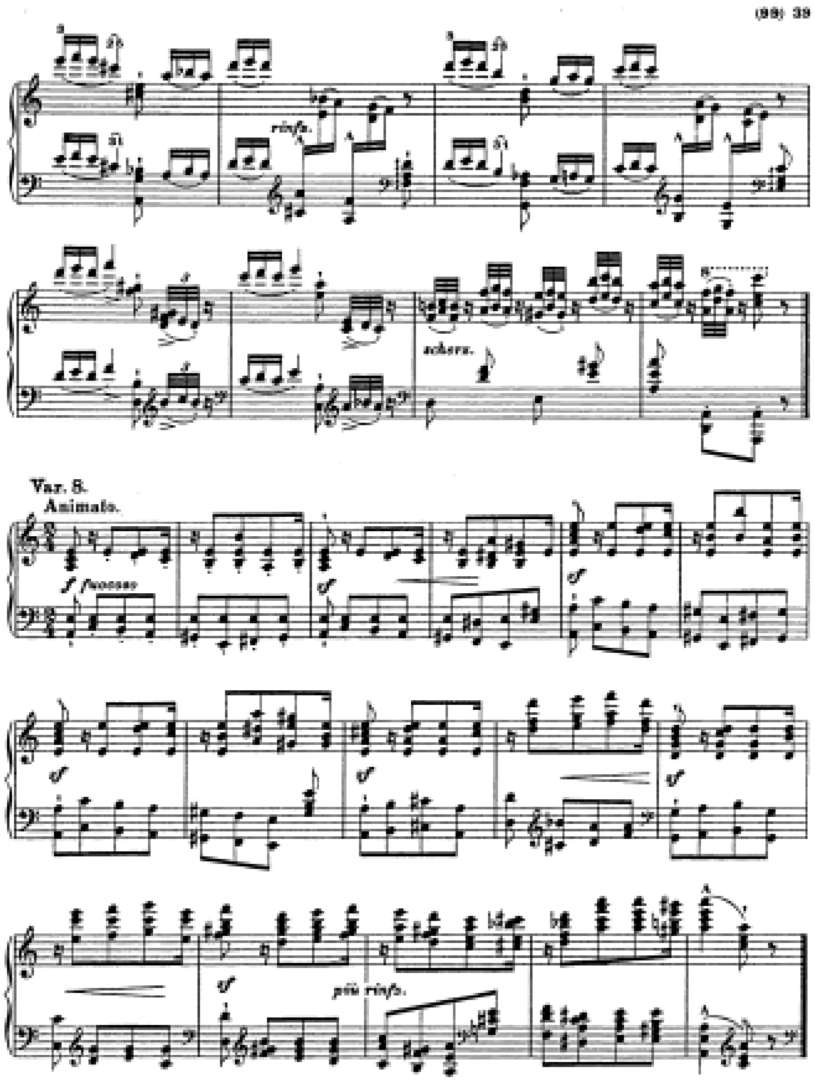
LISZT, PAGANINI STUDY NO. 6 [2/5]



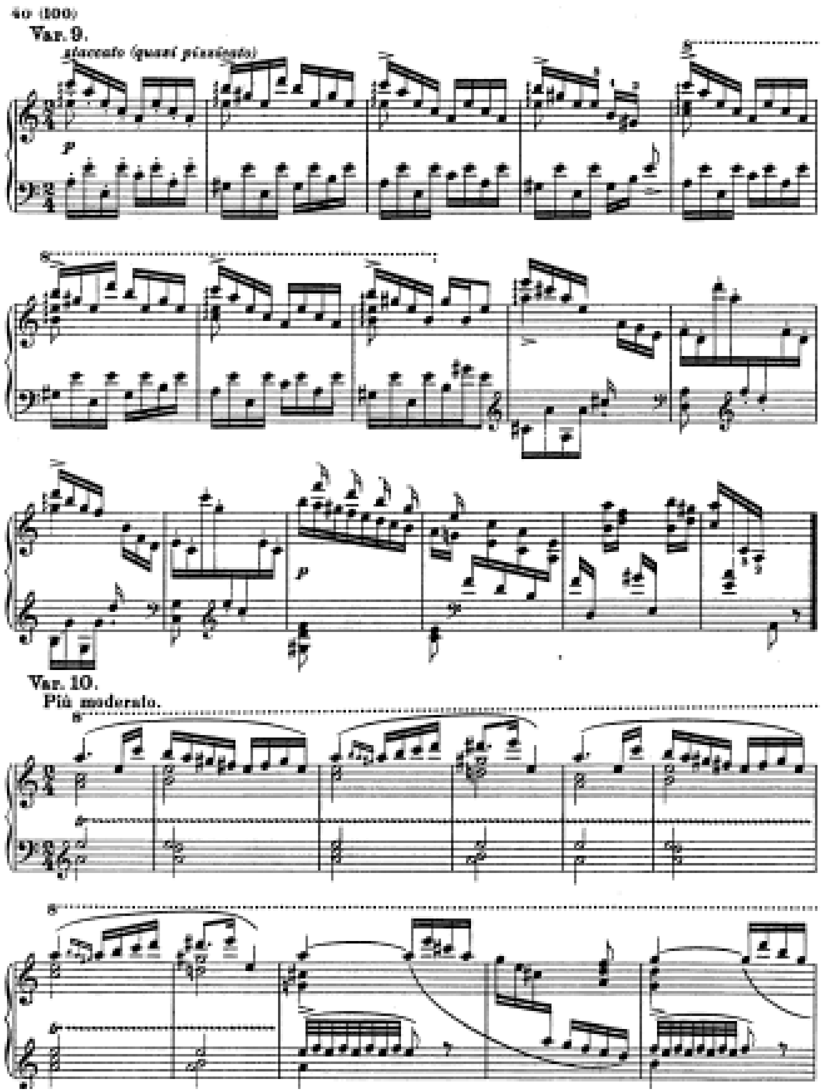


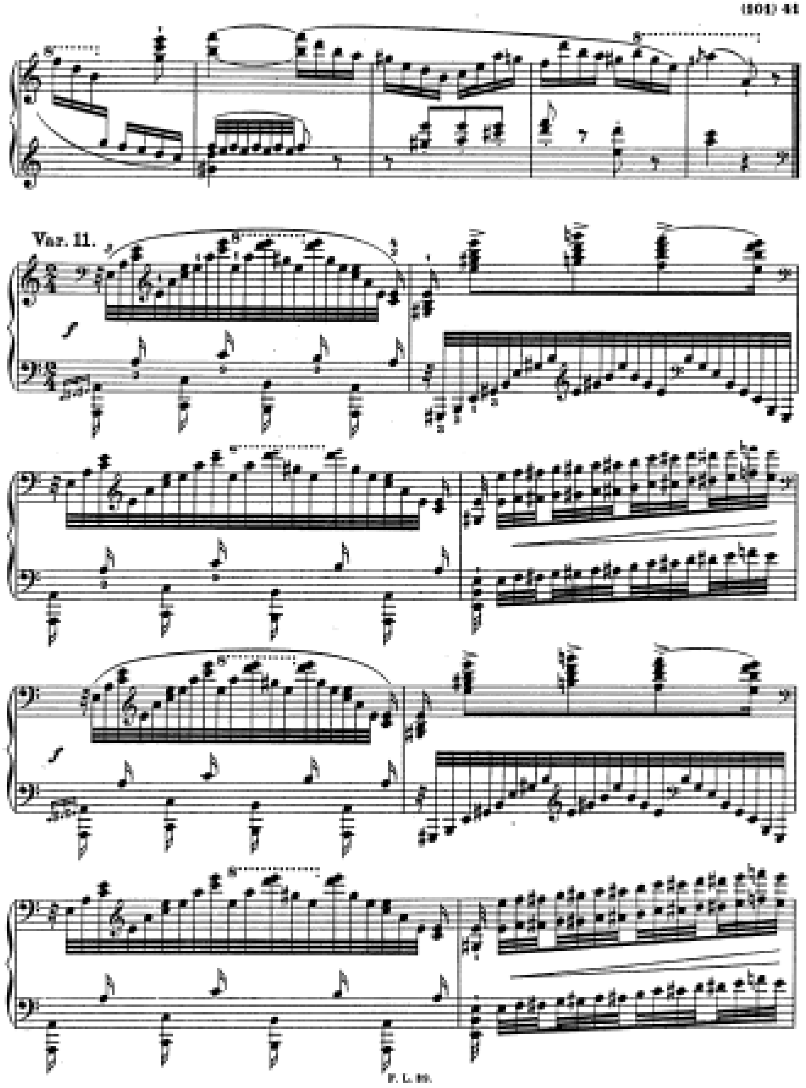
LISZT, PAGANINI STUDY NO. 6 [3/5]



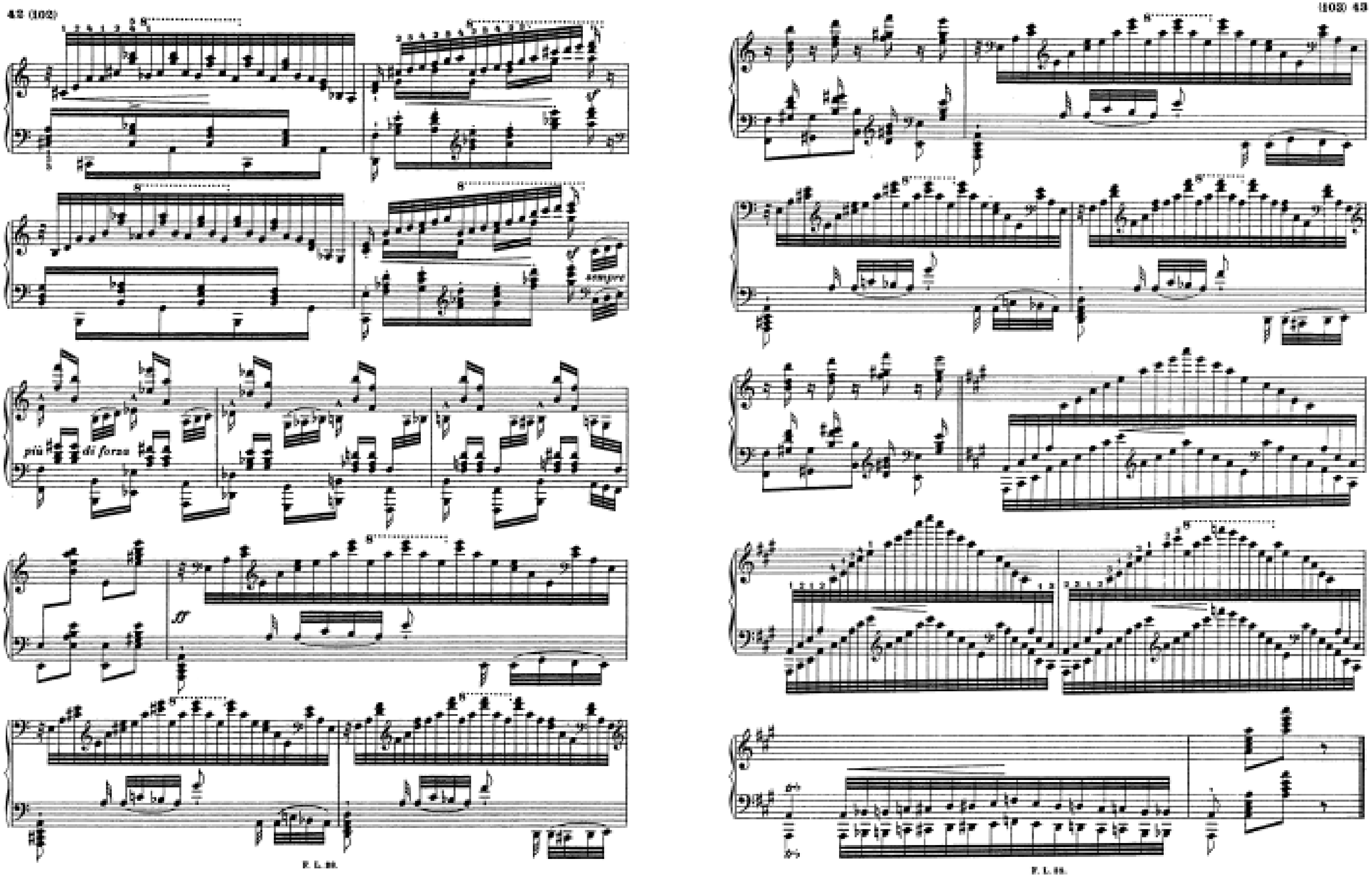


LISZT, PAGANINI STUDY NO. 6 [4/5]





LISZT, PAGANINI STUDY NO. 6 [5/5]



TRANSLATION OF GRETCHEN AM SPINNRADE

My peace is gone,
My heart is heavy,
I'll never find peace,
Never again.

Where I do not have him,
Is to me like a tomb,
The whole world
Is bitter to me.

My poor head
Is confused,
My poor mind
Is torn apart.

My peace is gone,
My heart is heavy,
I'll never find peace,
Never again.

For him alone do I look
Out the window
For him alone do I go
Out of the house.

His lofty bearing,
His noble figure,
The smile on his lips,
The strength of his gaze,

And his conversation's
Magical flow,
The press of his hand,
and ah! his kiss!

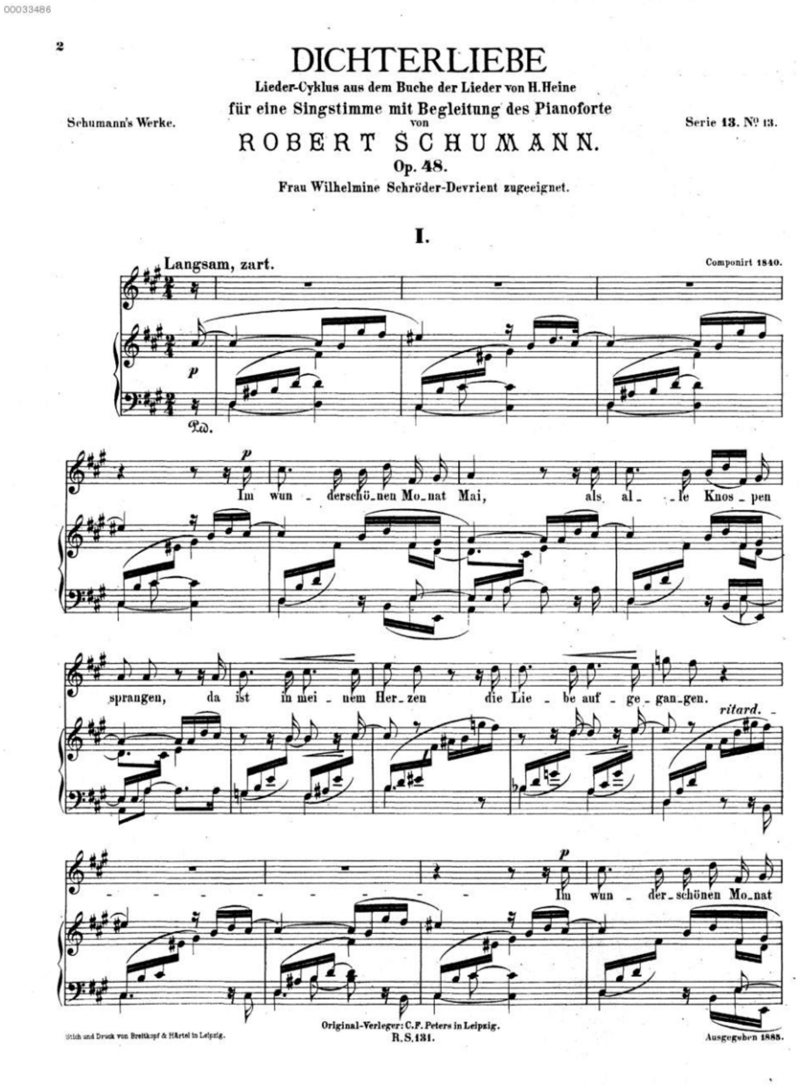
My peace is gone,
My heart is heavy,
I'll never find peace,
Never again.

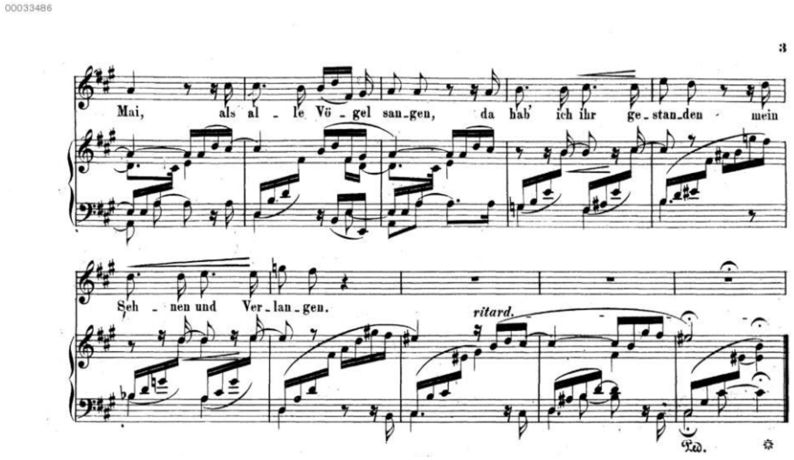
My heart pines
For him.
Ah, if I could seize him
And hold him!

And kiss him,
As I would wish,
At his kisses
I should die!

Text: Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, translation from NAWM 2010/2: 337-8 (modified)

SCHUMANN *DICHTERLIEBE*, NO. 1





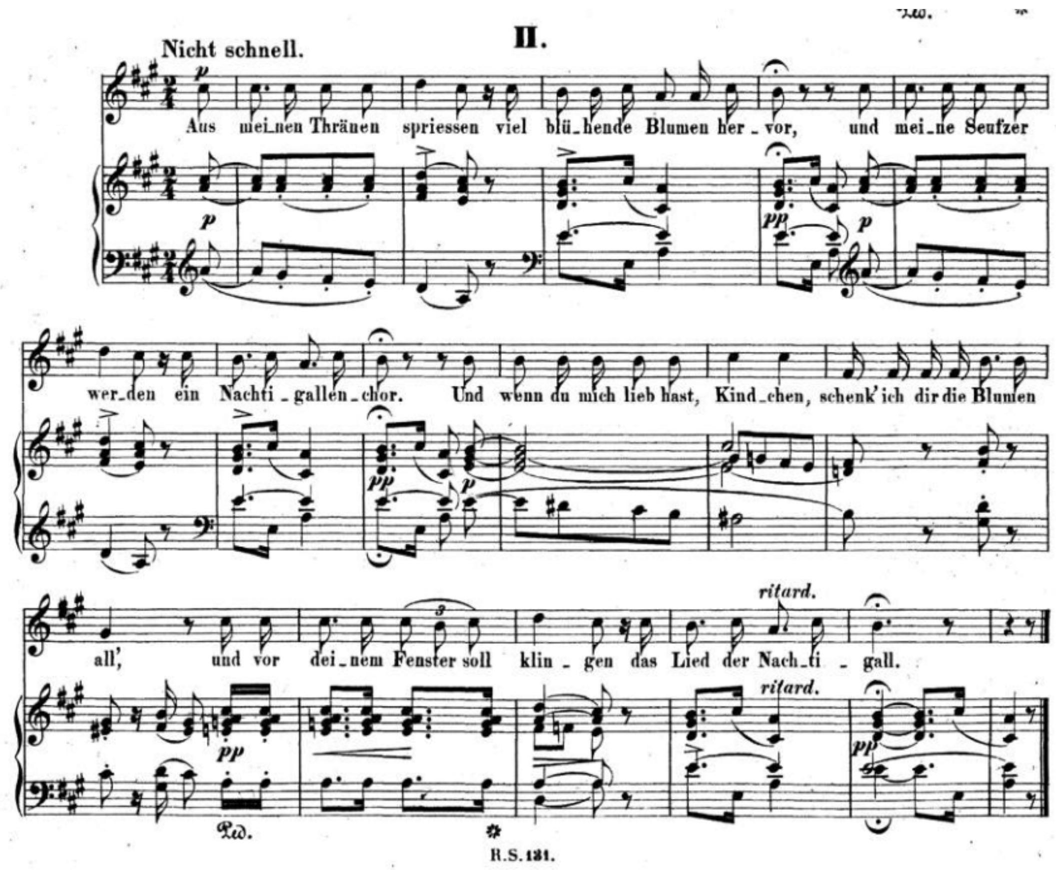
In the wonderfully beautiful month of May
When all the buds are bursting open,
There, from my own heart,
Bursts forth my own love.

In the wonderfully beautiful month of May
When all the birds are singing,
So have I confessed to her
My yearning and my longing.

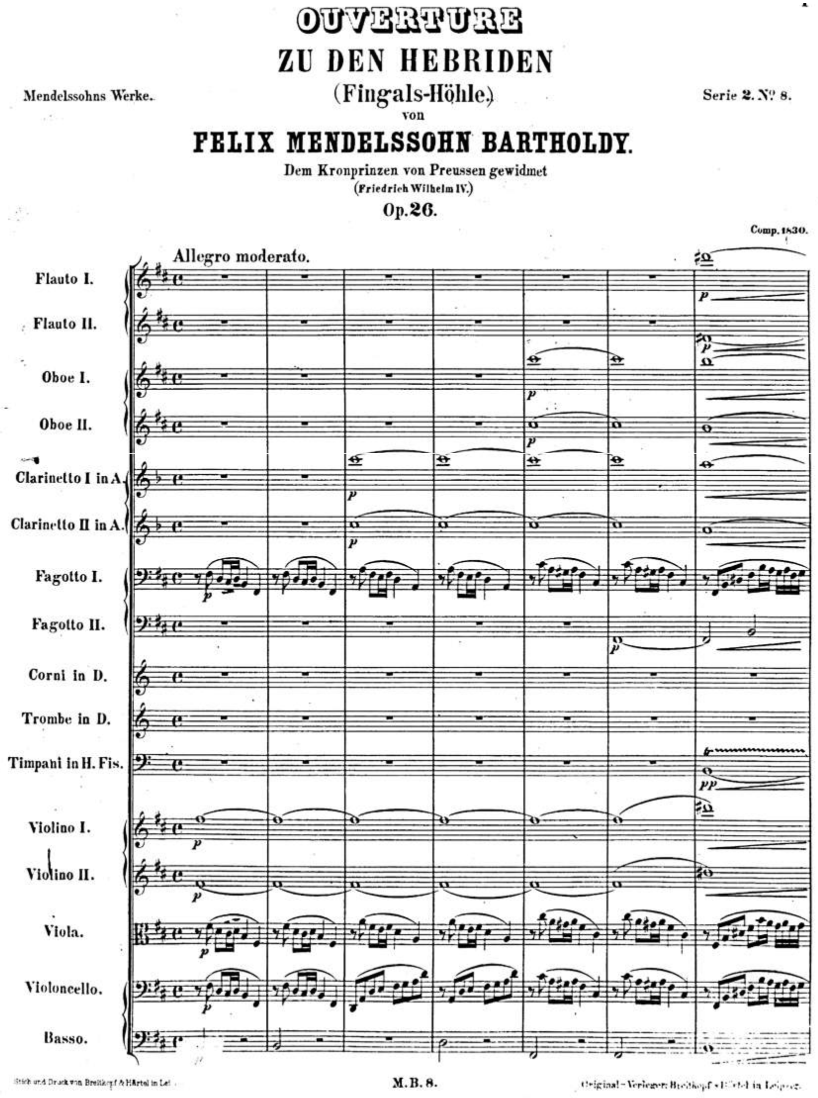
SCHUMANN *DICHTERLIEBE*, NO. 2

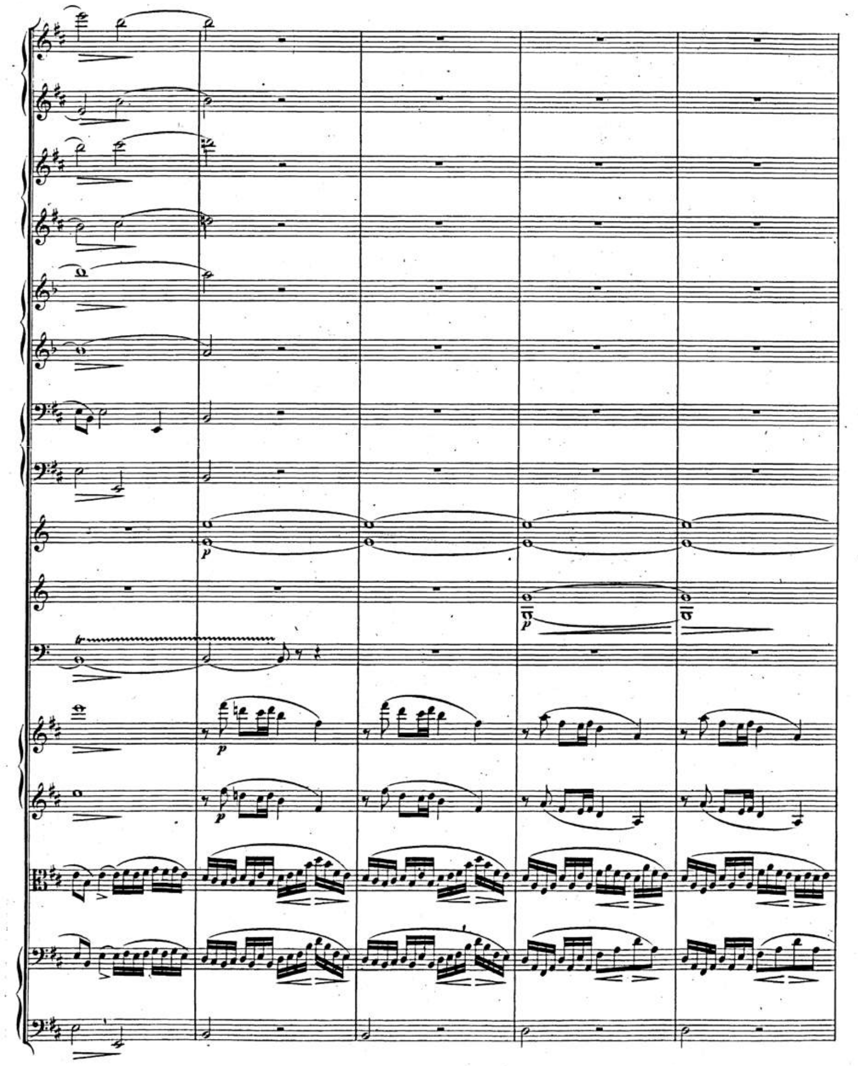
II
From my tears sprout forth
Many blooming flowers,
And my sighing become joined with
The chorus of the nightingales.

And if you love me, dear child,
I will send you so many flowers;
And before your window should
sound
The song of the nightingale.



MENDELSSOHN, *HEBRIDES* OVERTURE, OP. 26





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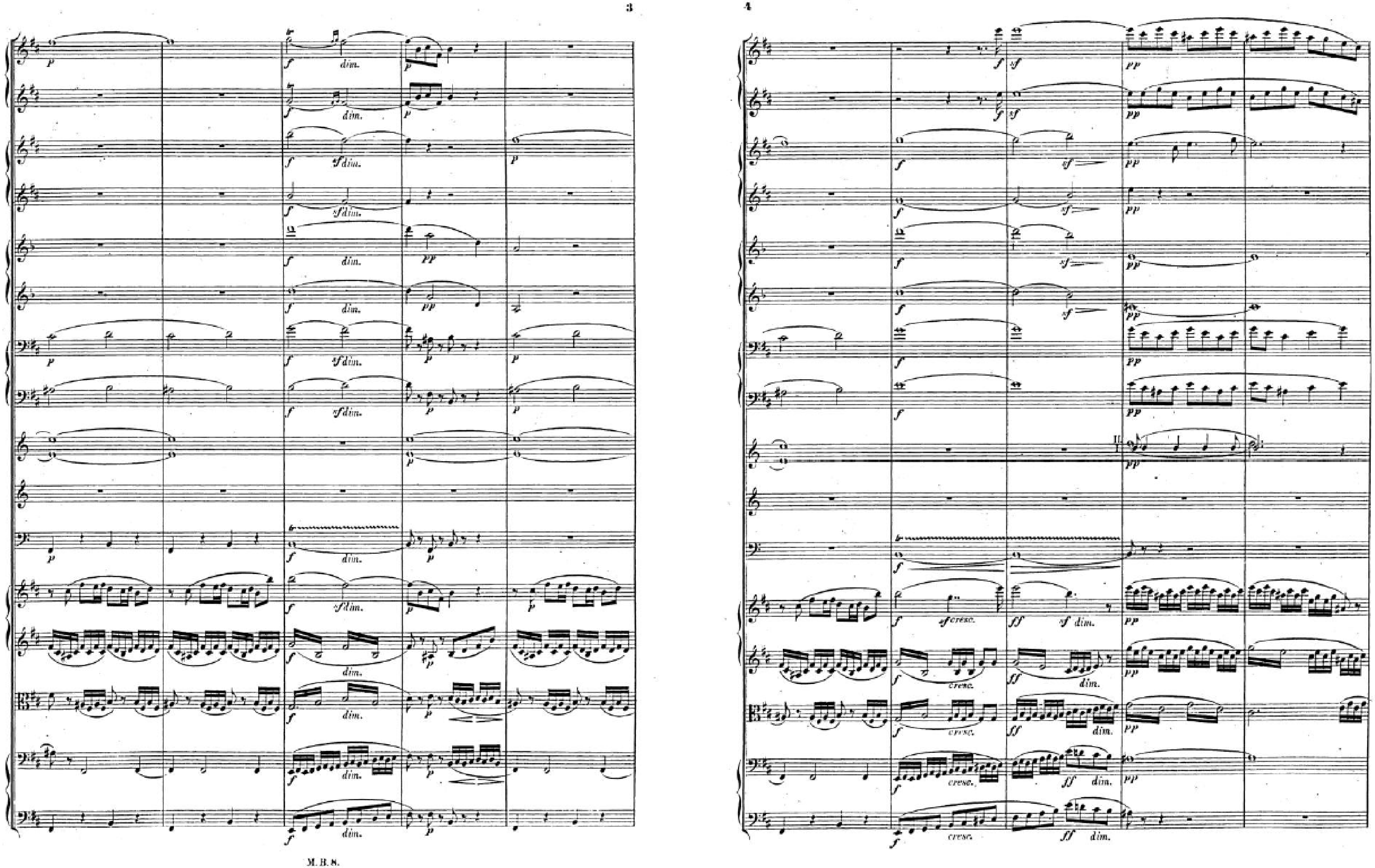

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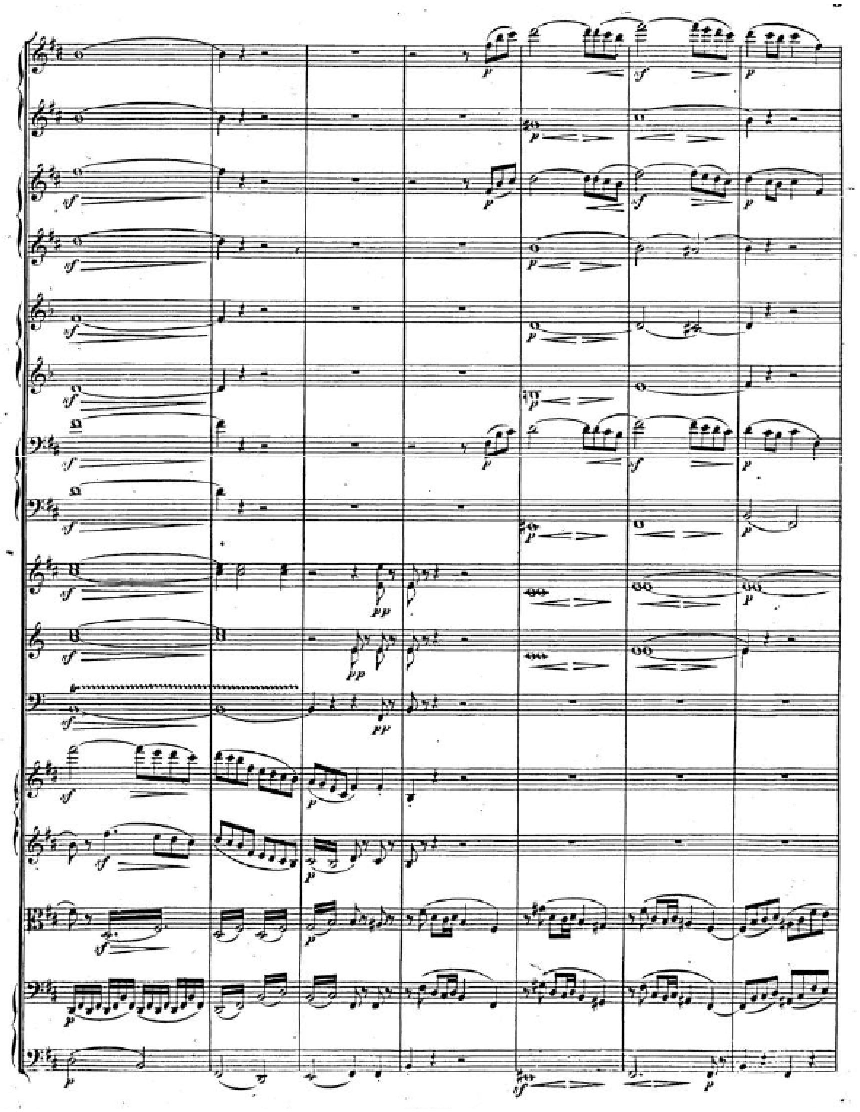

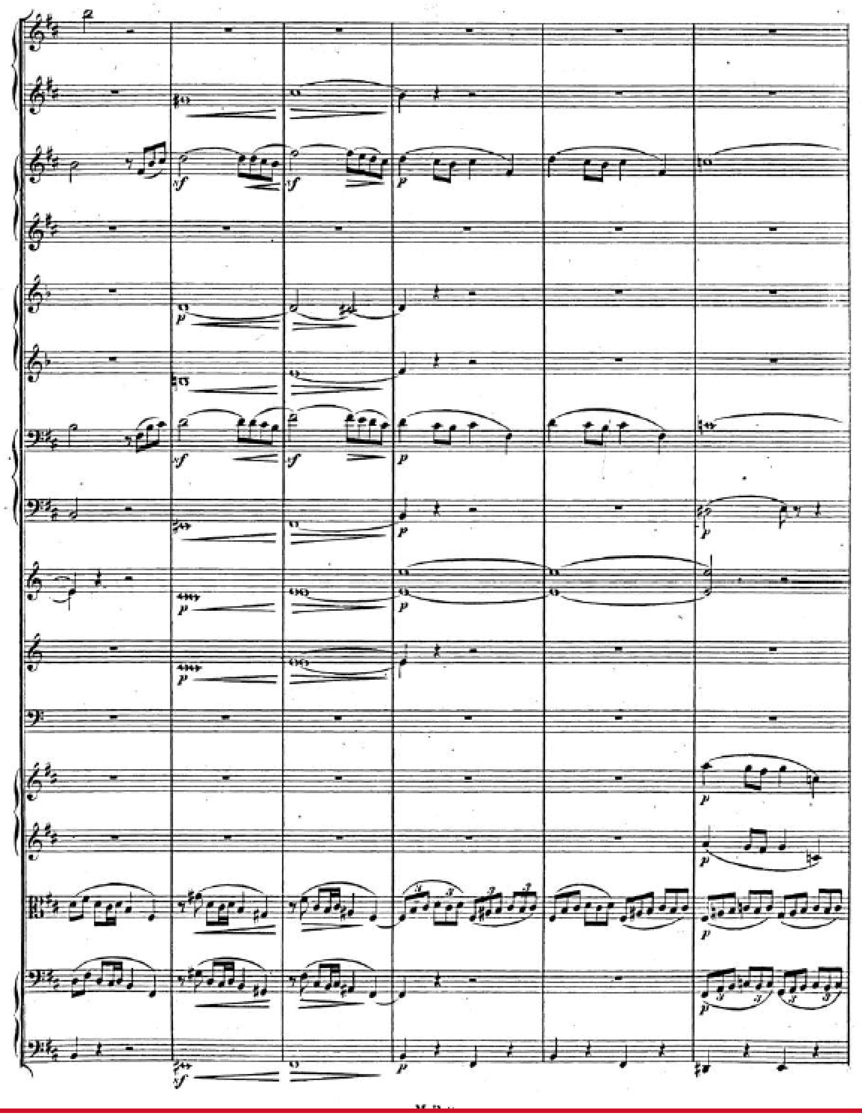

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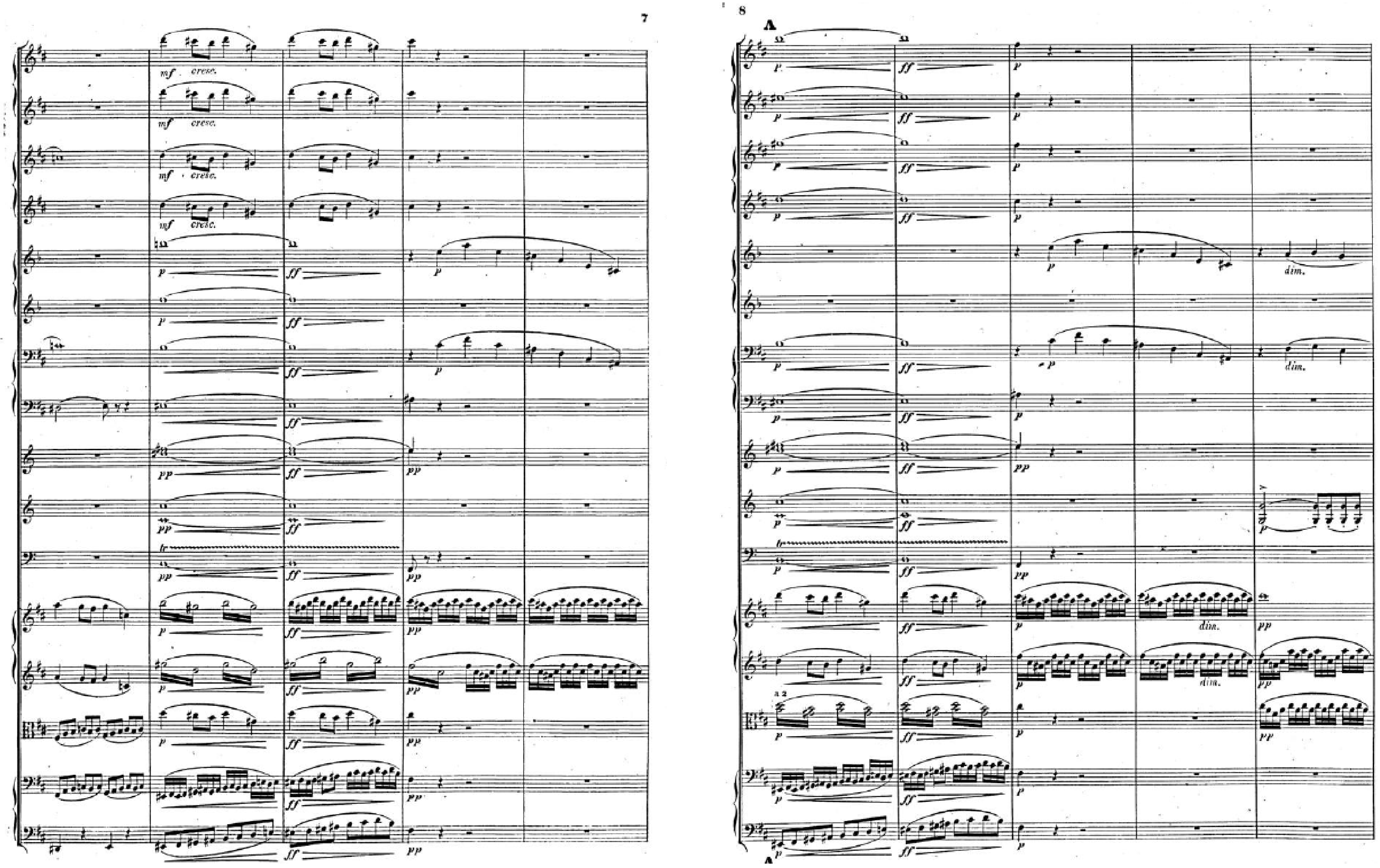

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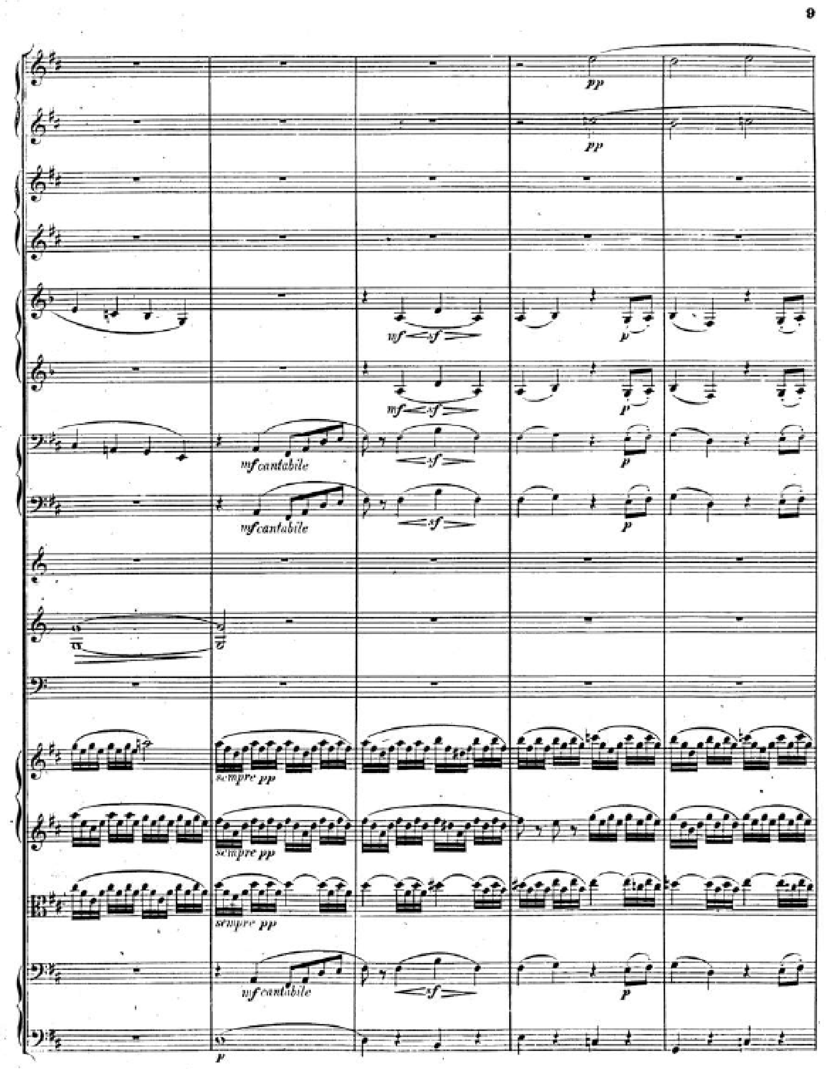

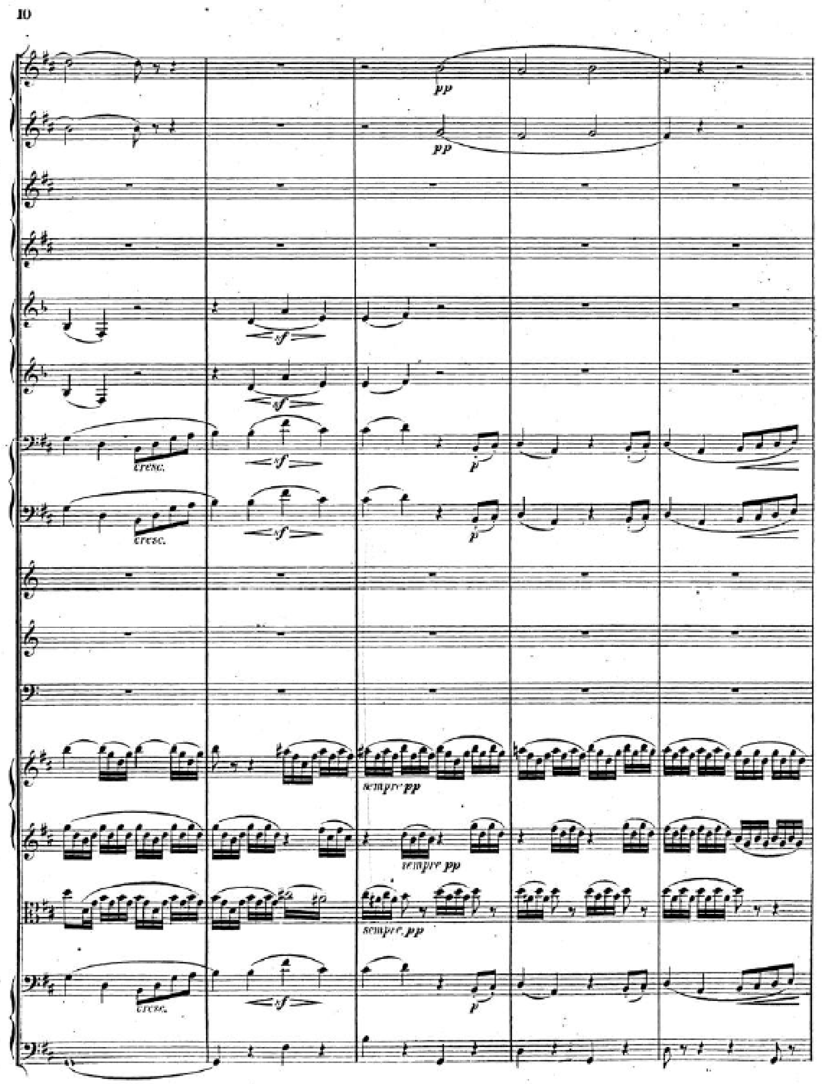

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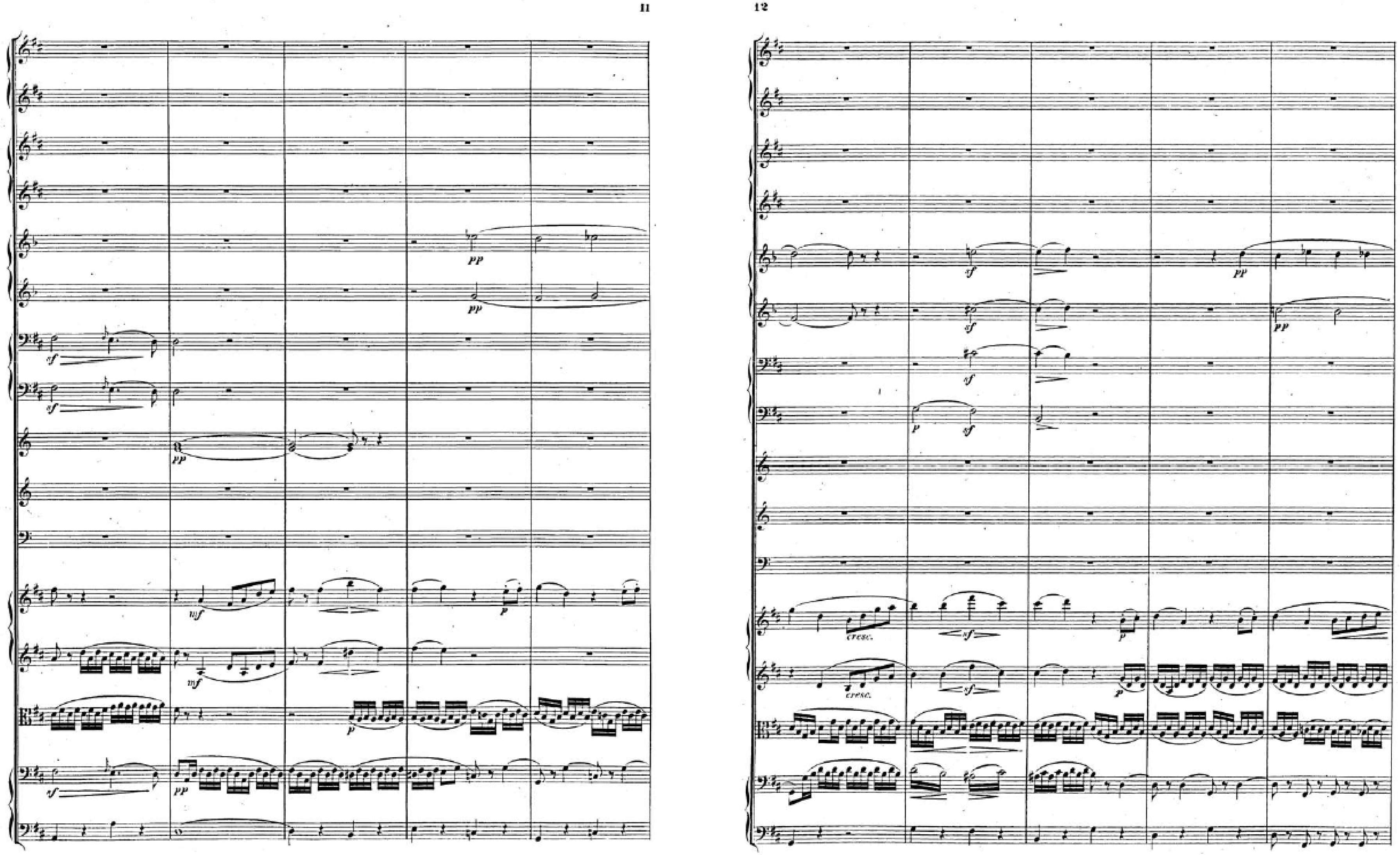

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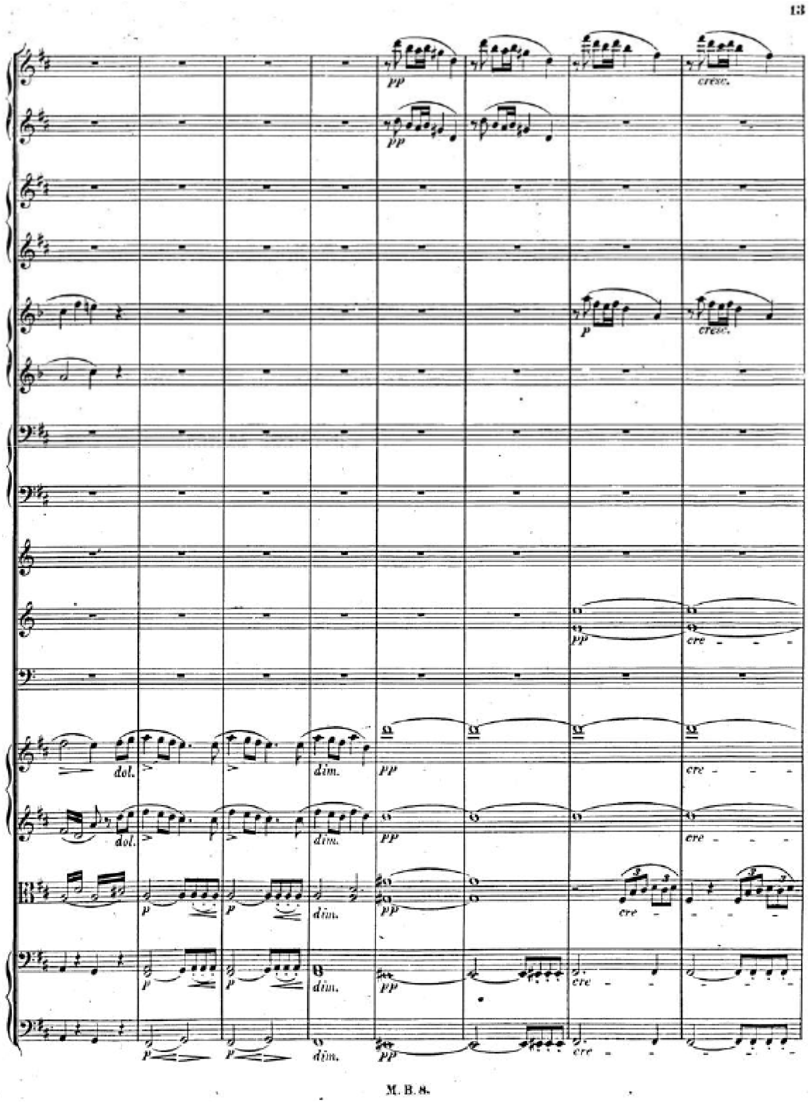

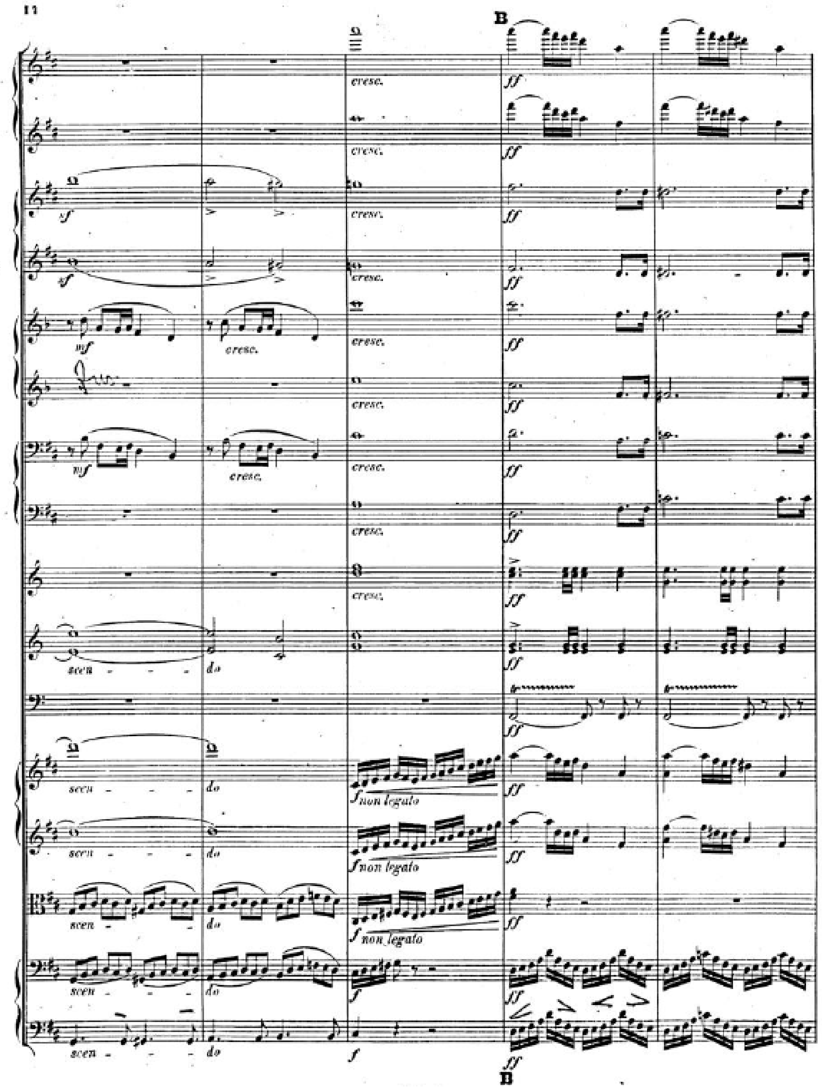

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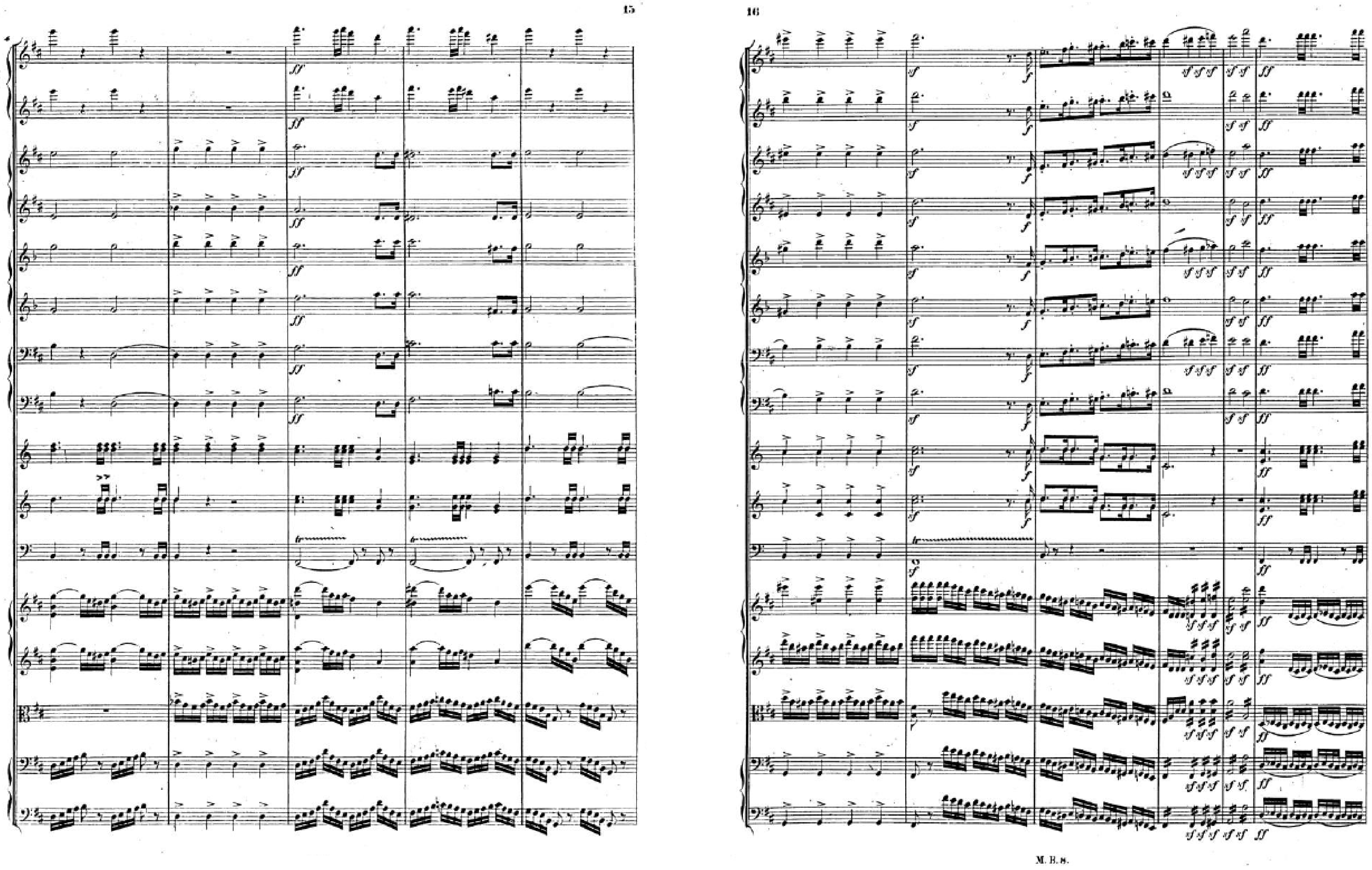

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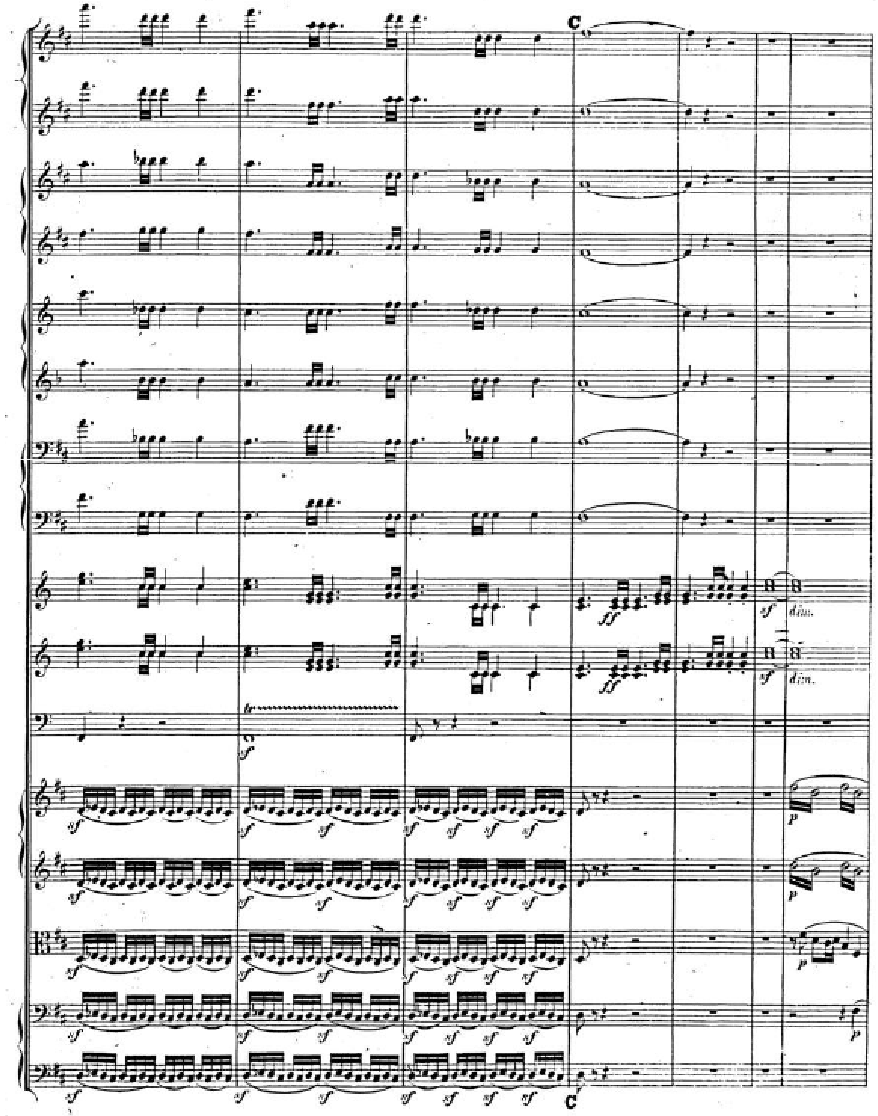

LECTURE RECAP

- Romanticism – an artistic movement which exalted subjective expression, the fantastic, the sublime
- Romantic art, especially music aims to convey non-religious spiritual enlightenment beyond any entertainment function
- As a period designation, the idea of the Romantic Era in music is problematic, but will be used in default of a clear alternative
- Many of the ideas associated with musical Romanticism still largely influence our understanding of music today (concert etiquette, elevation of the composer as genius, the canon, etc.)
- Character[istic] pieces for piano often exploited a single textural/affective idea
- The virtuosity of professional performers brought about a split between music intended for domestic use and that which might be performed in concert
- The Lied could be either lyric (emotional focus) or narrative (story-focus, typically in ballads). Collections of songs unified by topic (*Die schöne Müllerin*) and/or by musical features *(Frauenliebe und -leben)* are known as song-cycles
- The relationships between music and the other arts, and between music and nature were crucial in the Romantic period, as was the seemingly contradictory belief in instrumental music's autonomy and value